

### Hall Presents Vietnam War Veteran with Retroactive Benefits

*- Hall discussed reforming benefit process for veterans suffering from PTSD -*

Chester, NY – U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-Dover) joined Vietnam War Veteran Edwin Kehoe today to honor Veterans Day by presenting him with the retroactive benefits from the Veterans Administration (VA) that Kehoe had been waiting for. Hall also discussed reforming the benefits application process for veterans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Congressman Hall announced that he had succeeded in pushing the Veterans Administration (VA) to send Kehoe the retroactive benefits that had been approved, but unsent, since July. Kehoe suffers from PTSD and has end-stage emphysema. Further delay from the VA could have meant that the check arrived too late for Kehoe and his family.

Kehoe fought with honor in the United States Army from 1966-1971, and spent 1967-1968 as part of an 8 man reconnaissance team in Vietnam. For his service, Mr. Kehoe was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor, the Air Medal, the Army Commendation with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Combat Infantry Badge, and the Sharpshooter Badge.

Since the 1980's, Kehoe had been trying to get benefits from the VA for what is now known to be Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). In 1992, he received a 30 percent disability rating and started receiving some benefits. In 1996, 30 years after he first enlisted, Mr. Kehoe finally received a 100 percent disability rating, which gave him the resources to begin to overcome his PTSD. However, he was denied retroactive compensation for the many years his condition went untreated and negatively impacted his life. It took until July of this year for the VA's Board of Veterans Appeals to reverse that decision. Even then, it took action in October by Congressman Hall for Kehoe to receive all the benefits owed to him.

"Twenty years to get this decorated war veteran his benefits is a crime," Hall said. "Today is Veteran's Day, and I can't think of any better way to honor the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform than getting them the benefits they deserve."

Congressman Hall serves as Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on

Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, which has jurisdiction over the VA's compensation system. He has met with President Obama and Secretary Shinseki to urge them to change the way PTSD claims are handled at the VA. Hall is in the processes of working to remove evidentiary hurdles that veterans seeking service-connection for PTSD currently face. His COMBACT Act (HR 952), which would lower that evidentiary burden, has been passed out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for consideration by the full House of Representatives. At the same time, the Department of Veterans Affairs has proposed new rules that would incorporate elements of Hall's proposed legislation.

"PTSD, an invisible wound of war, afflicts so many of our returning troops, yet, the onus is on the veteran when it comes to getting their benefits," Hall said. "That is why I introduced the COMBAT Act earlier this year. My bill will make veterans who served in a theater of combat automatically eligible for PTSD benefits, so they don't have to spend 30 years fighting for what they've earned."

More information about Congressman Hall's COMBAT Act can be found at: [http://johnhall.house.gov/veterans\\_combatact.asp](http://johnhall.house.gov/veterans_combatact.asp)